

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 191419Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4697

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 13027

FROM AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, NI, UK

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SANUSI

1. MEA PERMSEC AMBASSADOR SANUSI APPEARED WHEN I MADE COURTESY CALL AUGUST 18 ON NIGERIAN ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER OLAITAN. HIGH POINTS FOLLOW OF CONVERSATION WHICH SANUSI COMPLETELY DOMINATED ON NIGERIAN SIDE, WITH OLAITAN SAYING NOTHING MORE THAN HELLO AND GOOD BYE.

2. NEITHER HMG NOR NIGERIAN PUBLIC ANY LONGER BELIEVED UK INVOLVED IN FEBRUARY COUP PLOT. FURTHERMORE, NIGERIANS NOW UNDERSTAND UK INABILITY UNDER ITS LAWS TO EXTRADITE OR OTHERWISE RETURN GOWON. FMG REQUEST FOR RETURN WAS NECESSARY PLOY AT THE TIME TO SHOW FIRM SMC HAND AND PLACATE PUBLIC OPINION. FMG NEVER SERIOUSLY BELIEVED BRITAIN COULD COMPLY.

3. UK HAS SENT INFORMAL FEELERS TO FMG REGARDING
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APPOINTING A NEW UK HIGH COMMISSIONER TO LAGOS. SANUSI

DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY PROPOSED NAMES.

4. NYERERE AND KAUNDA WOULD VISIT NIGERIA AND GHANA IN NEAR FUTURE. VISITS CONCEIVED AS STEPS TO BRING "FRONTLINE STATES" CLOSER TOGETHER WITH "REARGUARD" STATES ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES OF CURRENT CONCERN. NIGERIA AND GHANA (AND OTHERS WHOM SANUSI DECLINED TO NAME) BELIEVED THEY SHOULD AND COULD PLAY MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE IN BRINGING UNIFIED AFRICAN OPINION TO BEAR ON SUCH PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY IN AFTERMATH OF DISAPPOINTINGLY DIVISIVE OAU MEETING IN MAURITIUS.

5. CESSNA AFFAIR WAS ENTIRELY THE FAULT OF ZAIRE AND TOGO. "IF THE TOGOLESE AMBASSADOR KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE PLANES LEAVING LOME FOR NIGERIA, AND THE ZAIRE AMBASSADOR CANNOT CONFIRM THAT THE PLANES ARE DESTINED FOR HIS COUNTRY, CAN YOU BLAME US FOR BEING SUSPICIOUS?" WHEN I BROUGHT HIM UP TO DATE ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE AFFAIR, SANUSI ADMITTED HIS VIEWS WERE TWO WEEKS OLD AND HE'D BEEN ON LEAVE SINCE THEN. I TOLD HIM OF FCO CONCERN OVER CONTINUED DETENTION OF THE UK CITIZEN PILOTS AND OF US CONCERN FOR THE CONDITION OF THE PLANES AT UGHELLI. I REMINDED HIM THIS WAS ONLY ONE OF A SERIES OF RECENT NIGERIAN ACTIONS AGAINST PRESUMABLY INNOCENT FOREIGNERS THAT WERE VIEWED ABROAD AS UNREASONABLE AND CAPRICIOUS.

ARMSTRONG

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